

Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

Teacher water quality workshops

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature.

Deep Creek flows out of the southern side of Great Smoky Mountains National Park, just outside of Bryson City. A popular weekend spot, entering the park by Deep Creek takes you through a gauntlet of tube rental companies, doing their part to help people enjoy the stream.

On a recent Monday afternoon, this popular spot was besieged by a group of teachers from Swain, Macon, and Jackson Counties. The teachers spent the afternoon testing the streams' water chemistry, measuring its flow and mapping the stream bottom; and collecting and identifying stream insects. In collaboration with the National Park Service, The Environmental Education Fund, and the World Wildlife Fund, the workshop was one in a recent series of water quality workshops for educators in western North Carolina and eastern Tennessee. Other workshops were held in Spruce Pine, North Carolina, and at Sugarlands, on the Tennessee side of Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

The streams of the Southern Appalachians are incredibly diverse habitats – home to far more than the trout, muskie, or smallmouth bass they're often known for. A wide diversity of non-game fish, crayfish, and mussels call these rivers home. These streams are the foundation of vibrant fishing and paddling industries. They're where people play on Saturday and get baptized on Sunday. These workshops were part of an effort to provide teachers with a deeper understanding of the rivers, so they may pass it on to their students.

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.